

Level 4 Potential Conservation Area (PCA) Report

Name Upper Roaring Fork River

Site Code S.USCOHP*10307

IDENTIFIERS

Site ID 284 Site Class PCA
Site Alias None

Network of Conservation Areas (NCA)

<u>NCA Site ID</u>	<u>NCA Site Code</u>	<u>NCA Site Name</u>
-		No Data

LOCATORS

Nation United States Latitude 390826N
State Colorado Longitude 1064102W

<u>Quad Code</u>	<u>Quad Name</u>
39106-B7	Aspen
39106-A7	Hayden Peak
39106-B6	Thimble Rock
39106-A6	New York Peak
39106-B5	Mount Champion
39106-A5	Independence Pass

County

<u>Watershed Code</u>	<u>Watershed Name</u>
14010004	Roaring Fork

SITE DESCRIPTION

Minimum Elevation	8,000.00	Feet	2,438.40	Meters
Maximum Elevation	12,490.00	Feet	3,806.95	Meters

Site Description

The Upper Roaring Fork River site contains a fifteen mile stretch from the headwaters of the Roaring Fork River to Aspen, that includes alpine, subalpine, and montane riparian systems. The stretch spans between 8,000 and 12,490 feet and includes 6,851 acres. The following descriptions include details of smaller portions within the site. Northstar lies between Aspen, Smuggler Mountain, and Bell Mountain and consists of several diverse habitats, including haymeadows, sedge (*Carex* spp.) meadows, willow (*Salix* spp.) carrs, and narrowleaf cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia*) dominated riparian areas. This area is known to support a rich diversity of bird species. The Difficult Creek area can be divided into two sections. The lower section includes a campground with a low gradient stream and is somewhat degraded due to several trails. This section is characterized by a montane willow carr (*Salix monticola* - *S. geyeriana* / *Calamagrostis canadensis*), as well as narrowleaf cottonwood - Douglas-fir (*Populus angustifolia* - *Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and narrowleaf cottonwood - blue spruce (*Populus angustifolia* - *Picea pungens*) communities in the riparian area. Upstream from the campground, the condition is greatly improved. Douglas-fir, subalpine fir (*Abies lasiocarpa*) and narrowleaf cottonwood with Rocky Mountain maple (*Acer glabrum*) and serviceberry (*Amelanchier* sp.) dominate the riparian area. Adjacent to this, the vegetation is dominated by aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) and buckbrush (*Ceanothus* sp.). The uplands in this area include oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*) on the north-facing slopes and Engelmann spruce - subalpine fir (*Picea engelmannii* - *Abies lasiocarpa*) on the south-facing slopes. Further upstream, the riparian area is dominated by willow carrs. Other than a few anthropogenic disturbances such as a ditch, a picnic area and a historical display, this portion of the site is in pristine condition. The uplands are dominated by spruce - fir (*Picea engelmannii* - *Abies lasiocarpa*) and are crossed by several dramatic avalanche paths.

Key Environmental Factors

No Data

Climate Description

No Data

Land Use History

No Data

Cultural Features

No Data

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SITE DESIGN

Site Map Y - Yes

Mapped Date 05/05/1999

Designer Spackman, S.C.

Boundary Justification

This site includes 15 miles of excellent quality riparian communities and includes seven plant communities of special concern. A buffer of approximately 1,000 feet from the riparian vegetation was included to protect from direct disturbances such as road maintenance and development that change the overland water flow. Foraging and potential breeding habitat at the lower elevations are included to support nine of the species of state-rare birds. A much larger area should be considered to protect the specific hydrologic regime (water quality and natural flooding) of this site. Narrowleaf cottonwoods require periodic, above average, floods usually in June for seed germination and survival. Therefore, it is important to maintain a natural flooding regime.

Primary Area 7,945.61 Acres

3,215.49 Hectares

SITE SIGNIFICANCE

Biodiversity Significance Rank B2: Very High Biodiversity Significance

Biodiversity Significance Comments

The Upper Roaring Fork River site supports not only a plethora of elements of biodiversity concern, but also is the longest stretch of relatively pristine riparian vegetation observed on the Roaring Fork River. There is a large concentration of globally common riparian communities in excellent (A-ranked) and good (B-ranked) condition and a good (B-ranked) occurrence of the globally vulnerable G4T3/S3 Colorado River cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii pleuriticus*). Shrew specimens were taken at two locations during the 1997 field surveys. Long-tailed shrews are difficult to discern at the species level, and identification is generally only accurately accomplished with cranial (skeletal) analysis. The specimens have been sent to an expert in New Mexico to be verified. The preliminary external measurements and dental characteristics indicate Preble's shrew (*Sorex c.f. preblei*) and Merriam's shrew (*Sorex merriami*) are among the specimens captured. The Preble's shrew is typically a species of the upper Great Basin and Columbian Plateau, where habitats are generally described as semi-arid shrublands, including sagebrush, grasslands, alpine tundra, and sagebrush openings in subalpine forest (Hoffman and Fisher 1978; Fitzgerald et al. 1994). In Colorado, there are only three locations documented. Merriam's shrew is globally common occurring in shrublands from the southwestern U.S. to the Pacific Northwest. In Colorado, this species occurs in the northwest and southwest corners of the state and along the foothills region of the Front Range (Armstrong 1972; Fitzgerald et al. 1994). In general, there is little known about shrews in Colorado. It is expected that most of them are more common than the current information reflects.

Other Values Rank No Data

Other Values Comments

There is a historic report of a lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) in the "Independence Pass" area. Lynx, like other wide-ranging carnivores, need a very large, mostly undisturbed area for their home range. This large area is not incorporated into this site, but the lynx should be considered as an important historical element in this area.

LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Land Use Comments

No Data

Natural Hazard Comments

No Data

Exotics Comments

No Data

Offsite

No Data

Information Needs

No Data

ASSOCIATED ELEMENTS OF BIODIVERSITY

<u>Element</u>			<u>Global</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Driving</u>
<u>State ID</u>	<u>State Scientific Name</u>	<u>State Common Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Site Rank</u>
24836	<i>Salix planifolia</i> / <i>Caltha leptosepala</i> Shrubland	Subalpine Riparian Willow Carr	G4	S4	Yes

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Name	Site Code	S.USCOHP*10307
Upper Roaring Fork River		
24480 <i>Abies lasiocarpa</i> / <i>Mertensia ciliata</i> Forest	Montane Riparian Forests	G5 S5 Yes
24836 <i>Salix planifolia</i> / <i>Caltha leptosepala</i> Shrubland	Subalpine Riparian Willow Carr	G4 S4 Yes
24480 <i>Abies lasiocarpa</i> / <i>Mertensia ciliata</i> Forest	Montane Riparian Forests	G5 S5 Yes
24684 <i>Abies lasiocarpa</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Forest	Montane Riparian Forests	G5 S5 No
24480 <i>Abies lasiocarpa</i> / <i>Mertensia ciliata</i> Forest	Montane Riparian Forests	G5 S5 Yes
24805 <i>Salix planifolia</i> / <i>Calamagrostis canadensis</i> Shrubland	Subalpine Riparian Willow Carr	G4 S2S3 Yes
24836 <i>Salix planifolia</i> / <i>Caltha leptosepala</i> Shrubland	Subalpine Riparian Willow Carr	G4 S4 No
24832 <i>Abies lasiocarpa</i> - <i>Picea engelmannii</i> - <i>Populus angustifolia</i> / <i>Lonicera involucrata</i> Forest	Montane Riparian Forest	G4 S3 No
24836 <i>Salix planifolia</i> / <i>Caltha leptosepala</i> Shrubland	Subalpine Riparian Willow Carr	G4 S4 Yes
24836 <i>Salix planifolia</i> / <i>Caltha leptosepala</i> Shrubland	Subalpine Riparian Willow Carr	G4 S4 No
24684 <i>Abies lasiocarpa</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Forest	Montane Riparian Forests	G5 S5 No
24480 <i>Abies lasiocarpa</i> / <i>Mertensia ciliata</i> Forest	Montane Riparian Forests	G5 S5 Yes
21796 <i>Oncorhynchus clarkii pleuriticus</i>	Colorado River Cutthroat Trout	G4T3 S3 Yes
24684 <i>Abies lasiocarpa</i> / <i>Alnus incana</i> Forest	Montane Riparian Forests	G5 S5 No
24836 <i>Salix planifolia</i> / <i>Caltha leptosepala</i> Shrubland	Subalpine Riparian Willow Carr	G4 S4 Yes
24836 <i>Salix planifolia</i> / <i>Caltha leptosepala</i> Shrubland	Subalpine Riparian Willow Carr	G4 S4 Yes

REFERENCES

Reference ID	Full Citation
158951	Armstrong, D.M. 1972. Distribution of Mammals in Colorado. Monograph of the Museum of Natural History, University of Kansas. University of Kansas Printing Service, Lawrence. 415 pp.
168289	Butler, R. W. 1992. Great Blue Heron (<i>Ardea herodias</i>). No. 25 in A. Poole, P. Stettenheim and F. Gill, editors. The Birds of North America. The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia and The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.
172432	Fitzgerald, J. P., C. A. Meaney, and D. M. Armstrong. 1994. Mammals of Colorado. Denver Museum of Natural History and University Press of Colorado.
166656	Hoffmann, R. S. and R. D. Fisher. 1978. Additional distributional records of Preble's shrew (SOREX PREBLEI). J. Mammal. 59:883-884.
159506	Rosenfield, R. N., and J. Bielefeldt. 1993. Cooper's Hawk (<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>). No. 75 in A. Poole and F. Gill, editors. The Birds of North America. The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia and The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.

ADDITIONAL TOPICS

Additional Topics

No Data

VERSION

Version Date	05/05/1999
Version Author	Spackman, S.C.

Disclaimer

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